

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A method of repairing a valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of movable leaflets, the leaflets having a superior surface on a first side and an inferior surface on an opposing side, the method comprising:
 positioning a coapting device near the valve, the coapting device having a pair of movable arms,
 engaging the inferior surfaces of the leaflets with the arms;
 manipulating the arms to hold the leaflets in a coapted position in which at least portions of the superior surfaces face each other; and
 implanting the coapting device in the patient's heart to maintain the leaflets in the coapted position.
2. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 further comprising engaging the superior surfaces of the leaflets before moving the arms to the closed position.
3. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 2 wherein the superior surfaces of the leaflets are each engaged by a superior element movably coupled to the coapting device.
4. (Withdrawn-Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the leaflets are ~~pinched~~ engaged between the superior elements and the arms.
5. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 3 wherein the superior element is removed from the leaflets prior to implanting in the patient's heart.
6. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the arms are disposed in a delivery position during positioning of the coapting device near the valve, and further comprising spreading the arms from the delivery position to the open position after the positioning step.

7. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the coapting device is releasably coupled to a flexible shaft adapted for positioning through a blood vessel, and wherein the coapting device is implanted by releasing the coapting device from the flexible shaft.

8. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 7 wherein the flexible shaft is slidably positioned through a sheath disposed in the blood vessel.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the leaflets are not penetrated by the arms.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1 wherein the valve is in the patient's heart.

11. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 10 wherein the valve is the mitral valve.

12. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 11 wherein the positioning the coapting device comprises introducing the coapting device through the interatrial septum into the left atrium.

13. (Currently amended) An apparatus ~~Apparatus~~ for repairing a valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of movable leaflets, the leaflets having a superior surface on a first side and an inferior surface on an opposing side, the apparatus comprising:
a pair of arms coupled together and movable from an open position in which portions of the arms are spaced apart to a closed position in which the portions of the arms are closer together, the arms being configured to engage the inferior surfaces of the leaflets and hold the leaflets in a coapted configuration in which portions of the superior surfaces are facing each other;

wherein the arms are implantable in the patient's body to maintain the leaflets in the coapted configuration.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 further comprising a central member, the arms being movably coupled to the central member.

15. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the arms are configured to clamp the leaflets between the arms and the central member in the closed position.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the central member is configured to be positioned through the valve between the leaflets.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein the central member is detachably coupled to a shaft adapted for delivering the arms into the heart.

18. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 17 further comprising a pair of superior elements movably coupled to the central member shaft, the superior elements being configured to engage the superior surfaces whereby the leaflets may be pinched between the arms and the superior elements.

19. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the superior elements are coupled to a conduit slidably coupled to the central member shaft.

20. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the superior elements are resiliently biased into an extended configuration in which portions of the superior elements are spaced apart from the central member shaft for engaging the superior surfaces of the leaflets.

21. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the arms have engaging surfaces for engaging the ~~inferior~~ surfaces of the leaflets, ~~without penetration thereof~~.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the engaging surfaces have a texture or teeth for enhancing friction.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein the shaft is flexible and configured for positioning through a blood vessel into the heart.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23 wherein the shaft, arms and central member are slidably positionable through an endovascular sheath.

25. (Withdrawn) A method of repairing a valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of movable leaflets, the method comprising:

positioning a coapting device near the valve, the coapting device having a grasping element;

atraumatically grasping the leaflets with the grasping element to at least partially immobilize the leaflets relative to each other; and

implanting the coapting device in the patient's body, wherein the leaflets are not penetrated by the coapting device.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25 wherein the grasping element has a pair of opposing non-penetrating surfaces for pinching the leaflets therebetween.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 26 wherein the grasping element has a pair of movable jaws, the non-penetrating surfaces being disposed on the movable jaws.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25 wherein the leaflets have a superior surface on a first side thereof and an inferior surface on an opposing side thereof, and wherein the grasping element atraumatically engages the inferior surfaces of the leaflets.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28 wherein the coapting device is implanted with at least portions of the superior surfaces of the leaflets generally facing each other.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28 wherein the grasping element comprises a pair of movable arms, wherein the leaflets are immobilized by engaging the inferior surfaces and pinching the leaflets together with the movable arms.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30 further comprising atraumatically engaging the superior surfaces of the leaflets with a pair of superior elements.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25 further comprising applying energy to the leaflets before implanting the coapting device.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32 wherein the energy is applied to fuse at least portions of the leaflets together.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 25 wherein the valve is in the heart.

35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein the valve is the mitral valve.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 wherein positioning the coapting device comprises introducing the coapting device through interatrial septum into the left atrium.

37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 wherein positioning the coapting device comprises endovascularly positioning the coapting device through a blood vessel into the heart.

Claims 38-50 (cancelled).

51. (Withdrawn) A method of repairing a valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of movable leaflets, the method comprising:

atraumatically grasping the leaflets;
immobilizing at least a portion of the leaflets relative to each other; and
fastening the leaflets together without penetrating the leaflets.

52. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 51 wherein fastening the leaflets comprises applying a clip to the leaflets.

53. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 51 wherein fastening the leaflets comprises delivering energy to the leaflets.

54. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 53 wherein the energy is selected from radiofrequency, laser, microwave, or ultrasonic energy.

55. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 51 wherein the grasping, immobilizing and fastening of the leaflets is performed using endovascular devices.

56. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 51 wherein grasping, immobilizing and fastening of the leaflets is performed using the same device.

57. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 56 wherein the device is implantable.

58. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 51 wherein the valve is in the heart.

59. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 58 wherein the valve is the mitral valve.

60. (New) An apparatus for repairing a valve in a patient's body, the valve having a plurality of moveable leaflets, the leaflets having a superior surface on a first side and an inferior surface on an opposing side, the apparatus comprising:

a pair of arms coupled together and moveable from an open position in which portions of the arms are spaced apart to a closed position in which the portions of the arms are closer together, the arms being configured to engage the inferior surfaces of the leaflets and hold the leaflets in a coapted configuration in which portions of the superior surfaces are facing each other; and

a pair of superior elements movably coupled to a central member, the superior elements configured to engage the superior surfaces whereby the leaflets may be engaged between the arms and the superior elements,

wherein the arms and superior elements are implantable in the patient's body to maintain the leaflets in the coapted configuration and wherein the arms and the superior elements are moved independently of one another.

61. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the arms having engaging surfaces for engaging the surfaces of the leaflets.

62. (New) The apparatus of claim 61, wherein the arms engage the surfaces of the leaflets without penetration thereof.

63. (New) The apparatus of claim 61, wherein the engaging surfaces have a texture or teeth for enhancing friction.

64. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the arms and superior elements are slidably positionable through an endovascular sheath.

65. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the arms and superior elements are slidably positionable through a blood vessel into the heart.

66. (New) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the arms engage the surfaces without penetration thereof.